GENERAL, YOUR TANK IS A POWERFUL VEHICLE

It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men.
But it has one defect:
It needs a driver.

General, your bomber is powerful.
It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant.
But it has one defect: it needs a mechanic.

General, man is very useful.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one defect:
He can think.

—Bertolt Brecht, German Communist Poet

Murdering Millions to Protect Big Oil Profits

Capitalism Means War, War, War...

Events since the attacks of 9/11 have clearly exposed the basic internal contradiction of U.S. imperialism.

U.S. rulers enjoy overwhelming tactical superiority against all their rivals and against the international working class. Their military can intervene anywhere in the world and no one can yet deter it. They can commit murder and mayhem at will in their drive to consolidate their international oil empire and maintain their status as the dominant imperialist power.

At the same time, every brutal stage of the U.S. empire's international expansion contains the seed of its opposite. Despite appearances, the U.S. ruling class has strategic weaknesses.

The conflict raging in the Middle East has dealt U.S. rulers a major tactical setback. The bosses could care less about the number of Israeli civilians who die in suicide bombings or the wholesale murder of Palestinian workers by the Israeli military. Despite Bush's fake humanitarian posturing about dead teenagers, the real issue for U.S. imperialism is the control of oil.

Increasing millions of workers in every corner of the world hate U.S. imperialism. It has no real allies other than British bosses, and even they have serious conflicts with it. The U.S. military's plans to slaughter Muslim workers in defense of Exxon Mobil, Chevron, et al., appear ironically to play into the hands of al Qaeda and other capitalist forces who want to replace the U.S. as Persian Gulf energy barons. And the U.S. grand strategy of hemming in Russia and China in order to prevent their emergence as rival super-powers will eventually boomerang.

U.S. imperialism is far from done. It can and will inflict immense damage against our class in the years ahead. We must never underestimate its tactical strength or ruthlessness in pursuit of its own class goals. Most of its present superiority is due to the collapse of the old international communist movement, whose death has left millions of our class brothers and sisters around the world temporarily defenseless. Nonetheless, workers and communism still represent the future of humanity. The profit system with its mass terror, bloody oil wars and all its other horrors isn't destined to rule forever. We can learn to overthrow it with communist revolution and to rule society on the basis of workers' needs and aspirations.

At the moment, the sharpest class struggles are occurring as a rivalry between U.S. rulers and other capitalists whose profit interests compete with theirs. Bosses on all sides are using religion and nationalism to mislead workers into a deadly trap. As events unfold, particularly as the cost in blood of oil wars and police state terror becomes clearer, this too can change. The key to reversing the rulers' tactical and ideological domination remains our Party. The slow, hard, patient base-building work we do today can help build a new communist movement under any and all circumstances, even under the direst repression the bosses are planning. Workers will accept communist ideas provided we put them forward with determination and skill.

Today's passivity will not endure forever. Sooner or later, workers will rise in rebellion, both within the rulers' armed forces and throughout society at large. Everything we do to build our Party today can help influence the direction that upsurge will take when it ultimately develops. The PLP is in this struggle for the long haul, and the long haul will see the victory of our side.

The following pamphlet draws from the ideas published during the winter of 2001-02 in PLP's newspaper *CHALLENGE-DESAFIO*. We offer it as an organizing tool to all workers eager for leadership in the historic struggle to smash the profit system and imperialist war.

The Imperialists Who Control Oil Rule the World

Although seemingly almighty, U.S. rulers are actually fighting for survival in Afghanistan and Iraq. Without control of Middle Eastern oil, especially Saudi Arabia's huge reserves, U.S. imperialism would lose its main economic weapon. Led by Exxon Mobil, U.S. oil companies exert tremendous leverage over the countries they sell to by regulating the flow of capitalism's lifeblood. But billionaire Osama bin Laden's forces are trying to foment an Islamic rebellion that will wrest Saudi oil from the hands of the royal family and its pals at Exxon Mobil. And Saddam Hussein is uniting with Russian and French oil bosses in his own bid to grab a bigger share of Persian Gulf crude. U.S. bosses have already slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Afghan workers, and scores of GIs, to protect their vast but shaky oil empire. They are sure to spill more blood as threats increase.

The operations of the U.S.'s flagship oil company, Exxon Mobil, and

its allies show just how high the stakes are. Every day, Exxon Mobil pumps 2.6 million barrels of oil out of the earth and sells 8 million barrels of petroleum products, 5.6 million barrels of it to countries other than the U.S. The secret to this wizardry is Saudi Arabia, which sells the lion's share of its 8-million-barrel a day production to Exxon Mobil at cut-rate prices. Fellow Rockefeller firm Chevron Texaco is also in on the Saudi deal. So is Shell, an Anglo-Dutch business competitor but strategic ally of Exxon Mobil. The Saudi connection enables Exxon, Chevron, and Shell to command 45% of the non-U.S. world market for refined oil exports. Add in BP, which has similar deals with both the Saudis and Kuwaitis, and the U.S.-British share jumps to 59%. As an oil power, France trails a distant third, with TotalFinaElf's meager 11%. But that could change as French and Russian bosses join to exploit Russia's and Iran's production. And BP may yet slip from the fold. It has had sharp strategic differences lately with the main U.S. rulers over Russia, the Balkans and Alaska.

Persian Gulf crude, crucial to U.S. rulers now, will become even more so in the near future. The Middle East hold two thirds of the world's proven oil reserves. Saudi Arabia alone has a quarter. The U.S. Government predicts that by 2020, Persian Gulf will account for 42% of world oil production, up from today's 27%. At the same time, oil shipments from the Middle East to Asia will rise from four to 19 million barrels a day. China alone will see a 1700% increase to 6.9 million barrels.

U.S. rulers' supremacy depends greatly on their ability to dominate petroleum sources and markets. That's why they brutally counter every threat to their oily racket. Afghanistan is only the tip of the iceberg. U.S. bosses are dead set on deploying a massive ground force to invade Iraq and seize its oilfields. They only disagree about the timing and whether to go it alone or with allies. Potential conflicts with far more powerful foes lie down the road. Washington is taking advantage of Russia's temporary disarray to set up military bases in the heart of the old Soviet Union, right along oil routes that a resurgent Moscow would seek to control. U.S. troops are back in the Philippines, facing shipping routes to China, while China builds a deep-water navy to safeguard its future oil imports. The profit system generates oil wars without end.

(Sources: *The Oil Navigator*; *The Oil Daily*; U.S. Energy Information Administration; company reports)

Arab and Jewish Workers Need Unity:

Capitalism and Peace Can Never Co-Exist

Escalating violence in the Middle East has become a huge stumbling block for U.S. rulers' plan to attack Saddam Hussein. Decades of their backing of Israeli fascists -- supplying them with $3 billion annually, including the weapons with which to slaughter the Palestinians -- has enraged Arab workers in the region and, in turn, impelled criticism from Arab rulers (see below).

The Bush gang wrongly thought it could afford to launch the next phase of its latest oil war while ignoring the increasingly murderous struggle between Palestinian and Israeli bosses. Workers will pay a huge price in blood for the imperialists' miscalculations. We can also turn their quandary to our class's advantage by drawing proper conclusions and acting on them to build our Party.

Peace and imperialism can never co-exist. The Bush crowd has taken the politics of the absurd to a new level, by shamelessly admitting that they need to stop the fighting in the Middle East only to make war in the Persian Gulf. As one Bush administration underling told the *New York Times* (3/24): "...the key to dealing with the United States' strategic interests, the key to dealing with Iraq is through the peace process." So, according to the White House's twisted capitalist logic, peace equals war. But this is nothing new. Since the Carter administration, U.S. rulers have been trying to force a settlement down the throats of Israeli fascists and Palestinian nationalists. Every one of these deals has exploded in their faces.

When the Israeli army attacked Arafat's compound in Ramallah and the violence increased even more, Thomas Friedman called for U.S.-NATO troops to be stationed in the Middle East: ""So there you have it. Either leadership of good will get together and acknowledge that Israel can't stay in the territories but can't just pick up and leave, without a U.S.-NATOo force helping Palestinians oversee their state, or Osama wins..."(*NY Times, April 3, 2002).*

The failure of U.S. arm-twisting in the Middle East isn't due to Bush gang blatant incompetence but rather to the profit system's essential nature. The rivalry between Israeli and Palestinian capitalists is a miniature version of the inter-imperialist conflicts that pit the U.S. ruling class against the rest of the world. Israeli moneybags want to be the top dogs in the Middle East. Arafat & Co. wants a bigger piece of the pie for themselves. Within both the Israeli ruling class and the Arafat crew there are also internal contradictions, splits over market share, and divisions over tactics. All this fighting and infighting leads to a mountain of working-class corpses.

Pipelines to War

(The following excerpts of an article written by Pepe Escobar and published in the January 25 OnLine Asia Times confirm CHALLENGE's estimate that U.S. rulers' so-called "War on Terror" is really a cover for their attempt to forge a worldwide energy monopoly.)

"War against terrorism?Not really. Reminder: it's all about oil.

"A quick look at the map is all it takes. It's no coincidence that the map of terror in the Middle East and Central Asia is practically interchangeable with the map of oil. There's Infinite Justice, Enduring Freedom--and Everlasting Profits to be made: not only by the American

industrial-military complex, but especially by American and European oil giants...

"Afghanistan...is ultra-strategic: positioned between the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia, between Turkmenistan and the avid markets of the Indian subcontinent, China and Japan, Afghanistan is at the core of Pipelineistan...

"It's enlightening that all countries or regions which happen to be an impediment to Pipelineistan routes towards the west have been subjected either to a direct interference or to all-out war: Chechnya, Georgia, Kurdistan, Yugoslavia and Macedonia. To the east, the key problems are the Uighurs of China's far-western Xinjiang and, until recently, Afghanistan...

"Central Asia ia crucial to Washington's worldwide petro-strategy. So is a `friendly' government in Afghanistan...

"As for U.S. corporate-controlled media--from TV networks to daily newspapers--they just exercise self-censorship and remain mute about all of these connections."

AIR WAR VS GROUND WAR

In the decade since the self-destruction of the former Soviet Union, U.S. imperialism has shown a great aptitude for terrorizing and murdering workers from the air, in the Persian Gulf, the Balkans and now Central Asia. However, despite its enormous technological superiority, the U.S. military must still win "the old fashioned way" — on the ground — for Exxon Mobil and Wall Street to maintain their worldwide empire. And that is far easier said than done.

The big bosses face a growing dilemma: they remain reluctant to chance the political consequences of a protracted ground war, and yet they can't accomplish their aims without it. This dilemma is reflected in the military adventures they've launched since 1991:

- **Bush Sr. bombed Iraq for 43 days during Desert Storm I in 1991. The subsequent ground campaign lasted only four days. For a number of reasons, including "Vietnam Syndrome," Bush decided not to march on Baghdad. Saddam Hussein still holds power, and Iraqi oil remains beyond the control of U.S. energy companies. Aside from the Wolfowitz-Perle "mad bomber" faction of the U.S. government, the general consensus among Establishment bosses calls for an invasion force of at least 250,000 troops as the minimum condition for dumping the Saddam clique and setting up a pro-U.S. puppet regime in Baghdad.**
- **In 1994, Clinton tried to settle the civil war in Bosnia by bombing from the air while handing off the dirty work on the ground to U.S. "allies."**

- **The U.S. air offensive in the 1999 Kosovo war lasted more than two and a half months, proving effective "only against civilian targets in Serbia, Montenegro and on the territory of Kosovo itself, without any loss of life on the American side." U.S. military experts now agree that the air strikes against the Yugoslav armed forces were "almost totally ineffective, destroying no more than 12 or 13 enemy tanks....Yet the same experts argue that U.S. air strikes have become more effective from one war to the next." (Paul-Marie de La Gorce, "The Pentagon's Offensive New Defense Doctrine," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2002)**
- **The current "war against terror" in Afghanistan began from the air. When the U.S. goal shifted to replacing the Taliban with either the gangsters of the Northern Alliance, local Pushtun warlords or anyone promising to pacify Afghan territory for the benefit of U.S. oil interests, the U.S. began carpet bombing. This move "enabled...proxy ground forces to advance with the aid of a few U.S. special units and without the need for large-scale engagements" (de La Gorce). When the Taliban scattered its forces in Kandahar, the U.S. military decided to raze the city from the air. "The death toll has not been published" (de La Gorce). But the al Qaeda-Taliban forces seem far from done, and a strong possibility remains that they "have survived to fight another day." ("Last al-Qaeda Bastion Falls — For Now," *London Times*, 3/16).**

Sooner or later, the U.S. ruling class will be forced to put its military where its crucial oil interests lie — on the ground. As this process unfolds, many opportunities will arise for our Party to earn its stripes in the cauldron of class struggle and to learn how to lead masses of soldiers in turning the guns around.

U.S. AIM: BLOCK RUSSIA

The key goals of U.S. imperialism's expanding oil war include preventing Russia's resurgence as a rival for world domination. As *CHALLENGE* has said for several years, a U.S foreign policy objective is blocking the rise of a "rival super-power." The only two potential candidates are China and Russia. China remains a long-range threat, which U.S. bosses are still figuring out how to handle.

Russia, for the moment, is another story. The self-destruction of the former Soviet Union handed U.S. imperialism its most significant strategic victory since World War II. The rulers are working overtime to capitalize. The first stage of their plan to keep Russia on the defensive was economic attack. Led by the theories of Harvard guru Jeffrey Sachs, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) used free-market "reforms" to wipe out the gains Soviet workers had made under socialism and to turn the "new" Russia into an economic basket case. The results of the IMF's meddling have proved disastrous to the Russian working class:

- **Soviet Socialist Russia used to produce more engineers and scientists than any country in the world. Today, ten million Russian children don't enroll in school.**

- **In the last ten years, the Russian economy has shrunk by half. Real wages are down 40%. One Russian in three lives in dire poverty. Eight in ten have no savings.**
- **The life expectancy of Russian men has fallen to levels unseen since the 19th century. Suicides have doubled. Alcoholism has increased by 300%. Medical care under socialism, once the envy of the world, has declined so much that diseases of poverty like cholera, typhus, and diphtheria have returned in epidemic proportions.**

But even this devastation doesn't satisfy U.S. imperialism. In area, Russia remains the world's largest country, even without the former Soviet republics. It possesses a nuclear arsenal. Although politically divided for now, it could still rebound. So U.S. rulers have embarked on a military strategy to complement their economic attacks.

The "war on terrorism" has given Bush & Co. an excuse to establish a military presence along Russia's southern flank, in the energy-rich Caspian. U.S. rulers see this as getting two for the price of one: they hope to secure Caspian oil and gas at gun point and at the same time kick a former key rival when he's still down.

Since December 2001, the U.S. military, particularly the Air Force, has taken over many former Soviet military bases in Central Asia. Between 8,000 and 10,000 U.S. and NATO officers and other military personnel have already set up base on these beach-heads. The Pentagon's Big Lie states that this is a "temporary" situation, lasting only until the U.S. pacifies Afghanistan. However, Elizabeth Jones, a U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, spilled the beans recently: "When the Afghan conflict is over, we will not leave Central Asia. We have long-term plans and interests in this region..."

But the U.S. military presence in Central Asia doesn't tell the whole story of Washington's intention to encircle its former main rival. According to *Stratfor*, "U.S. forces are now stretched from Norway and several other European countries neighboring Russia through Turkey, Georgia and three Central Asian states...This latest deployment [to Georgia — Ed.] only adds to the pressure on Russia's strategic position along its entire western and southern border."

The profit motive and strategy intersect here. Whoever controls the oil market rules the world. The law of maximum profit impels the top imperialist power to seek monopoly control over oil. One U.S. goal, in the words of journalist Armen Khanbabyan, is the establishment of "firm and long-term control over the energy resources of Central and Upper Asia." Russia's bosses know that their ability to rise again as an imperialist power depends, among other things, on their success in securing these same energy resources for their own class interests. The moneybags of Exxon Mobil et al. are using the U.S. military as a battering ram in the struggle to get there first and ensure that the Russian energy barons get no more than crumbs and junior partner status.

Therefore, the playing field of this deadly new "great game" includes more than just Central Asia, but also the Transcaucus. "Very soon," writes Khanbabya, "the Americans and Turks will appear in Azerbaijan, and in quantities much greater than in Georgia, as Washington

has already signed an agreement with Baku on the modernization of the local armed forces."

Appearances could lead to the conclusion that U.S. imperialism can do anything it wants. But appearances never tell the whole story. True, the U.S. military seems able to intervene wherever its bosses like, and no one can yet mount a frontal counter-attack. But Afghanistan isn't the only place where U.S. troops face a long war of attrition. Similar developments are likely to occur throughout the Central Asian and Transcaucasian region the U.S. intends to occupy. No wonder this area is called "the arc of instability."

Take Uzbekistan for example. Its president, a fascist crook named Karimov, just returned from visiting Bush, who anointed him the U.S.'s chief underling in Central Asia and sent the U.S. military to dismantle his primary opposition. Uzbekistan has been baptized a U.S. "strategic partner," and Karimov has received the triple bribe of dollars, political prestige and U.S. military protection. But, as *Stratfor* points out, "...the repressive Karimov's goal to use Washington's support to increase his power in Central Asia could create additional...threats for Washington to deal with in the future."

In this case, this threat is likely to come from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). As Bush's current "war against terror" shows, the bin Laden-al Qaeda strategy of provoking U.S. military atrocities could play directly into the hands of Muslim capitalists who want to use mass religious-nationalist uprisings to drive the U.S. rulers out of their driver's seat in the oil-producing countries. As *Stratfor* warns, "By strengthening Karimov in order to eradicate the IMU, Washington is exchanging an acute victory for a chronic problem."

The same deal with the devil may well apply to Washington's grand strategy for keeping Russia down. True, Russian president Putin appears to be allowing the U.S. to have its way. But he's undoubtedly trying to buy time to get his own house in order and gambling that the U.S. will overextend itself over the next two decades while Russian imperialists gain strength and rebuild their economy, infrastructure, and military. Other forces within the Russian ruling class want to move much more aggressively and sooner than Putin.

In other words, every aggressive move by the U.S. will eventually lead to its opposite. The fundamental character of the "war against terror" remains inter-imperialist rivalry. The history of inter-imperialist rivalry shows that the second-rank forces always come gunning for the top dog. Despite the appearance of U.S. supremacy, this process has already begun.

The U.S. encirclement of Russia will lead to much wider wars than the ones U.S. rulers have already launched, with consequences far beyond their control. The Progressive Labor Party's essential strategic job remains the same at every stage of this long and bloody process. We must take the ideological offensive at all times and under all conditions and keep the red flag of communist revolution flying high. Eventually, we will be able to take the tactical offensive as well.

(*Sources: Stratfor.com; Center for research on Globalization; CDI Russia Weekly*)

U.S. AFGHAN VICTORY? NOT QUITE

Despite the double-talk from Bush and his henchmen in the White House and military, the U.S. military hasn't exactly covered itself with glory during its campaign in Afghanistan. U.S. claims of victory in the supposedly major battles of Tora Bora and "Operation Anaconda" don't look too believable.

In Tora Bora last December, hundreds of al Qaeda-Taliban soldiers hid out in caves and promised a fight to the death. The all-Afghan proxy force fronting for U.S. imperialism allowed them to escape and live to fight another day, "leaving their American paymasters wringing their hands in frustration." (*London Times*, 3/16)

Neither Mullah Omar, the Taliban's key leader, nor U.S. bogeyman bin Laden was captured or killed.

In early March, the U.S. launched Operation Anaconda. The spinmasters in Washington anointed it "the biggest American ground assault of the war." Yet only 25 corpses of anti-U.S. soldiers had been found by mid-March, and the U.S. had captured barely 20 prisoners. Eight U.S. soldiers died on the first day of fighting, and according to the Pentago they represent the total number of U.S. troops killed in the entire battle. Several U.S. helicopters were shot down by small arms fire.

While the U.S. commander estimates his forces killed about 500 al Qaeda-Taliban troops, U.S. imperialism's Afghan pals dispute even this figure: "Only 50 to 60 were killed. Most of them escaped," according to Gulbuddin, a top aide to Afghan Defense Minister Mohammad Fahim (*Reuters*, 3/19).

This is hardly the "brilliant" triumph trumpeted by U.S. commander Hagenbeck and echoed by Bush and his cronies. In fact, the mainstream European press paints a picture of gross U.S. military incompetence. According to the *London Times* (3/12), "Hundreds of American troops were pulled out of the [Operation Anaconda] ground battle with al Qaeda forces because they failed to adapt to the guerrilla tactics required for fighting in the mountains....The American military has described the withdrawal as a tactical reappraisal of their battle plan, but Afghan commanders told a different story of inexperienced American soldiers unable to advance through the unfamiliar mountains to track down al Qaeda and Taliban foes. 'They were not trained for the kind of fighting we do in the mountains and...their kind of fighting is useless,' Commander Allah Mohammed said. 'They were weakening our morale, it was better for them to go.'"

The *Times* further quoted the Afghan deputy commander as believing self-preservation stopped the Americans from launching a more decisive attack: "They didn't want to risk losing lots of fighters." Seeing bombers sweeping the skies, another commander said, "They are still trying to wipe out the al Qaeda from the air, but if forces don't go in, it is impossible to finish them off."

The *Times* also reported that "Afghan commanders believe that the U.S. has exaggerated the number of casualties in the bombing campaign.... 'We have been very close to their positions and we have seen no dead bodies....' Afghan leaders say that the many pathways through the mountains are providing not only escape routes for the fighters but a means of replenishing their ranks."

***Stratfor.com* says that, "The U.S. has yet to find an effective response on the ground to guerrilla warfare.... Only a few dozen militants have been killed...and U.S. losses have been significantly higher than the eight dead and 40 wounded officials have acknowledged."**

[This battle] "signals the beginning of a protracted guerrilla war that will allow Afghanistan to continue to serve as sanctuary for al Qaeda." [The U.S. found that] "Enemy forces in the area were actually much larger" [than they estimated].... Most...were Taliban....fighters...with several years of guerrilla experience and intimate familiarity with the region, [and] launched surprise attacks.... The first [was an] ambush of about 100 U.S. troops" and another one that killed six U.S. soldiers.

***Stratfor* concluded that the Taliban is using "a classic guerrilla tactic: Dozens of militants draw the attention of U.S. units while guerrilla groups in the rear of the attackers stage hit-and-run operations.... Taliban forces have...outwitt[ed] allied forces [before]," abandoning Afghanistan's cities with almost no losses, only to regroup in the countryside and prepare for future battles. These weathered warriors are too skillful to simply lie still and wait for U.S. air power to destroy their main forces."**

Even pro-U.S. Israeli scribbler Zev Chafets takes issue with Bush's lies in the *New York Daily News* (3/17): "Despite the boasting, Anaconda was transparently not a great victory, and that alone is enough to make it a psychological defeat. The [U.S. opponents] followed the campaign closely...and they must be encouraged by what they saw: an American army still unwilling to commit an effective number of troops to a decisive ground battle."

In other words, "Vietnam Syndrome" — the fear that mounting casualties in a ground war will spark rebellions within the U.S. military and U.S. society at large — continues to haunt the rulers. Bush can mouth off all he wants about his generous willingness to accept the death of many U.S. working-class soldiers while he sits in the safety of the White House. The soldiers themselves are the ones who must do the fighting and dying, and so far neither Bush nor his brass has managed to inspire them.

Again in the *Daily News*, Chafetz quotes a U.S. general telling the House Armed Forces Committee that the soldiers are "tired." This admission of battle fatigue after a few relatively minor skirmishes is a very bad sign for U.S. imperialism. It suggests that the bosses have good reason to worry about the political loyalty of the workers driven into their armed forces by racist economic conditions.

As the oil war spreads and requires an increasing commitment of U.S. ground troops, this contradiction will intensify, especially after the rulers find themselves forced to restore the draft. Even if a new round of terrorist attacks on U.S. soil gives the bosses a fresh excuse to whip up a frenzy of patriotic BS, that sort of flag-waving can't forever hide the war's true character. The super-profits of a few huge oil companies won't inspire

millions of working-class soldiers and sailors to make heroic sacrifices far from home over many years.

Millions inside and outside the armed forces can come to recognize the murderous, racist character of the bosses' oil wars. Oppressed workers inside the U.S. military can eventually see that they have far more in common with the oppressed Arab and Muslim workers they're supposed to kill than they do with the bosses and officers ordering the slaughters. Just as working-class GIs led anti-brass rebellions in Vietnam, black, Latin, and white workers will eventually provide the spark of rebellion within the U.S. military. Millions of other soldiers and workers can learn to follow their lead.

These developments may take years to mature. But they are inevitable. Our Party has an indispensable role throughout this process. As conditions sharpen, the rulers will attack us ferociously to prevent us from playing it. We can learn to advance under these attacks and to turn them into their opposite.

Personal Testimony of an Israeli Refusenik

By Asaf Oron

[Asaf Oron, a Sergeant Major in the Giv'ati Brigade, is one Israeli soldier who signed the "Fighters' Letter" declaring that from now on they will refuse to serve in the Occupied Palestinian territories. There were 251 signers as of February 17, 2002. Below are excerpts of his statement.]

On February 5, 1985, I got up, left my home, went to the Compulsory Service Center on Rashi Street in Jerusalem, boarded the rickety old bus going to the Military Absorption Station and turned into a soldier.

Exactly seventeen years later, I find myself in a head-to-head confrontation with the army, while the public at large sees me as a traitor undermining democracy and politicizing the army.

Almost no one asks: why would a regular guy get up one morning in the middle of life, work, the kids and decide he's not playing the game anymore? And how come he is not alone but there are now over two hundred regular, run of the mill guys like him who've done the same thing?

Our parents' generation lets out a sigh: we've embarrassed them yet again. What did you raise us on? Universal ethics and universal justice, on the one hand: peace, liberty and equality to all. And on the other hand: "the Arabs want to throw us into the sea," "They are all crafty and primitive. You can't trust them."

....I was raised on two value systems: one was the ethical code and the other the tribal code, and I naïvely believed that the two could coexist.

This is the way I was when I was drafted. Not enthusiastic, but as if embarking on a sacred mission of courage and sacrifice for the benefit of society. But when, instead of a sacred mission, a 19-year-old finds himself...violating human beings' dignity and freedom, he doesn't dare ask — even himself — if it's O.K. or not. He simply acts like everyone else and tries to blend in....

You get used to it... you go out on patrol that is, walk the streets like a king, harass and humiliate pedestrians to your heart's content...and at the same time feel like a big hero defending your country.

For a long time, I could not relate to the whole "heroism" thing. But when, as a sergeant, I found myself in charge, something cracked inside me. Without thinking, I turned into the perfect occupation enforcer. I settled accounts with "upstarts" who didn't show enough respect. I tore up the personal documents of men my father's age. I hit, harassed, served as a bad example — all in the city of Kalkilia, barely three miles from grandma and grandpa's home-sweet-home. No. I was no "aberration." I was exactly the norm.

Having completed my compulsory service, I was discharged, and then the first Intifada began (how many more await us?) Ofer, a comrade-in-arms who remained in the service has become a hero: the hero of the second Giv'ati trial. He commanded a company that dragged a detained Palestinian demonstrator into a dark orange grove and beat him to death.

(In the current Intifada, incidentally, the vast majority of incidents involving Palestinian deaths are not even investigated. No one even bothers.)

....A copy of The Yellow Wind [a book on life in the Occupied Territories by the Israeli writer David Grossman]...crossed my path. I finally understood what I had done over there.

I began to see that they had cheated me: They raised me to believe there was someone up there taking care of things. Someone who knows stuff that is beyond me, the little guy. And that even if sometimes politicians let us down, the "military echelon" is always on guard, day and night, keeping us safe, each and every one of their decisions the result of sacred necessity.

....Most people discover...they must choose between two value systems: an abstract, demanding one that is no fun at all and that is very difficult to verify, and another which calls to you...who is one of us and who is our enemy....I picked the first road, and found myself volunteering in a small, smoke-filled office in East Jerusalem, digging up files about deaths, brutality, bureaucratic viciousness or simply daily harassments....

Out of the blue, I was called up for the very first time for reserve duty in the Occupied Territories. Hysterically, I contacted my company commander. He calmed me down: We will be staying at an outpost overlooking the Jordan river. No contacts with the local population is expected. And that indeed was what I did, but some of my friends provided security for the Damia Bridge terminal [where Palestinians cross from Jordan to Israel and vice-versa].

This was in the days preceding the Gulf War and a large number of Palestinian refugees were flowing from Kuwait to the Occupied Territories (from the frying pan into the fire). The reserve soldiers — mostly right wingers — cringed when they saw the female conscripts stationed in the terminal happily ripping open down-comforters and babies' coats to make sure they didn't contain explosives.

Three years later, when I spent three weeks with a celebrated reconnaissance company in the confiscated ruins of a villa at the outskirts of the Abasans.... it became clear to me that the same humane reserve

soldier could also be an ugly, wretched macho undergoing a total regression back to his days as a young conscript.

Already on the bus ride to the Gaza strip, the soldiers were competing with each other: whose "heroic" tales of murderous beatings during the Intifada were better (in case you missed this point: the beatings were literally murderous, beating to death).

Going on patrol duty with these guys once was all that I could take. I went up to the placement officer and requested to be given guard duty only.... Thus began the nausea and shame routine, a routine that lasted three tours of reserve duty in the Occupied Territories. The "pale-gray" refusal routine.... I would turn into a hidden "prisoner of conscience," guarding an outpost or a godforsaken transmitter on top of some mountain, a recluse. I was ashamed to tell most of my friends,....to hear them get on my case for being such a "wishy washy" softy.

I was also ashamed of myself: This was the easy way out. I was not directly engaged in wrongdoing — only made it possible for others to do so while I kept guard.

Why didn't I refuse outright?.... It was partly the pressure to conform, partly the political process that gave us a glimmer of hope that the whole occupation business would be over soon. More than anything, it was my curiosity to see actually what was going on over there.

....I had no trouble seeing, through the fog of war and the curtain of lies, what has been taking place over there since the very first days of the second Intifada.

For years, the army had been feeding on lines like "We were too nice in the first Intifada," and "If we had only killed a hundred in the very first days, everything would have been different." Now the army was given license to do things its way. I knew full well that [former Prime Minister] Ehud Barak was giving the army free hand, and that [current Chief of Staff] Shaul Mofaz was taking full advantage of this to maximize the bloodshed.

By then, I had two little kids, boys, and I knew from experience that no one — not a single person in the entire world — will ever make sure that my sons won't have to serve in the Occupied Territories when they reach 18. No one, that is, except me. And no one but me will have to look them in the eye when they're all grown up and tell them where dad was when all that happened. It was clear to me: this time I was not going.

Initially, this was a quiet decision, still a little shy, something like "I am just a bit weird, can't go and can't talk about it too much either." But as time went by, as the level of insanity, hatred, and incitement kept rising, as the generals were turning the Israeli Defense Forces into a terror organization, the decision was turning into an outcry: "If you can't see that this is one big crime leading us to the brink of annihilation, then something is terribly wrong with you!"

And then I discovered that I was not alone.

I understand why everyone is mad at us. We spoiled the neat little order of things. First, we declare our commitment to the first value system. The one that is elusive, abstract, and not profitable. We believe in the moral code.... We believe that there is no room for the tribal code, that the tribal code simply camouflages idolatry, an idolatry of a type we

should not cooperate with. Those who let such a form of idol worship take over will end up as burnt offerings themselves.

Second, we (as well as some other groups who are even more despised and harassed) are putting our bodies on the line, in the attempt to prevent the next war. The most unnecessary, most idiotic, cruel and immoral war in the history of Israel.

And you? If you are nowhere to be seen, you are probably inside the tank, advising the driver.

Exposing Pedophile: U.S. Bosses' Tactic in Its Rivalry with European Imperialists

The media's exposé of pedophile priests in Boston has exploded into an attack on Catholic leaders reaching the Pope himself. Conservative Pope John Paul II represents European forces whose interests clash worldwide with those of the dominant Rockefeller faction of the U.S. ruling class, in the auto, financial and oil industries and over Iraq.

As *Challenge* has reported, pressing war needs led the more powerful U.S. capitalists to air the church's age-old dirty secret. Calling for liberal reforms in the church, the main wing hopes to win the nation's 62 million Catholics closer to the ideology it uses to mask its endless oil wars. U.S. rulers claim to be combating terrorism, religious tyranny, and the oppression of women in Afghanistan. Now, as they set their sights on Iraq, U.S. rulers must weaken the faithful's allegiance to the Vatican

John Paul II ascended to the papacy largely with the aid of Opus Dei. A shadowy, ultra-conservative Catholic sect begun by Spanish fascists under Franco, Opus Dei now has its most powerful backers among French industrialists and financiers. *Le Monde Diplomatique* (Sept. 1995) named Claude Bebear, Michel Albert, Didier Pineau-Valencienne and Louis Schweitzer as major supporters of Opus Dei. They have headed, respectively, AXA (France's biggest financial firm), insurance giant AGF, Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB), and automaker Renault. Operating in the U.S. as Alliance Capital, AXA competes directly with old-line Wall Street firms on their own turf. AGF serves as the chief insurer of TotalFinaElf, the oil company that holds the biggest contracts with Saddam Hussein to develop Iraq's oilfields. CSFB has underwritten major projects for Russia's rulers. Renault builds cars in Argentina and Brazil, where GM and Ford once ruled. Raymond Barre, a former French prime minister, testified in favor of sainthood for Opus Dei's founder. Barre has fought long and hard for a single European currency, the euro, that might challenge the dollar's worldwide supremacy.

So it's clear why *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd is criticizing the pope and Cardinals Law of Boston and Egan of New York for hindering the worldwide progress of the U.S. Establishment's ideas. "The Vatican's cavalier attitude will only intensify the collision between the open, modernizing spirit of America and the deeply anti-democratic spirit of the church," she wrote (3/24). Three days later, Dowd attacked by name the papal mouthpiece, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, and the pope's hand-picked

successor, Dario Castrillon Hoyos. One belongs to Opus Dei; the other praises it in his sermons. (The *Boston Globe*, which launched the attack on the Church, is owned by Dowd's boss, *The New York Times*.)

Egan has come under heavy fire, supposedly because he sheltered priestly perverts, but more likely because he serves the wrong gang of capitalists. Last year Egan blessed the new U.S. headquarters of Opus Dei in Manhattan. He also spoke at the Manhattan Institute, a think tank that helped hammer out Mayor Giuliani's openly fascist policies before his miraculous conversion to the Establishment line. The Institute promotes "faith-based initiatives" like vouchers for parochial schools and is run largely by agents of anti-Rockefeller European moneybags. Trustees include Roger Hertog and Lewis Sanders, both Alliance Capital executives, and CSFB's U.S. chairman, CEO John Hennesy.

As their warmaking intensifies, Rockefeller & Co. require a Catholic church more like the U.S. Episcopal church, one that marches in lockstep with them. That's what this scandal is all about. (After all, millions knew about these pedophiles for years. Why the sudden media offensive now?) The liberal rulers care no more about the U.S. children abused by priests than they care about the children they themselves have blown to bits in Afghan villages, those they are starving in Iraq *or those boys and girls raped and abused around U.S. military bases from Okinawa to Honduras.* But the vast majority of Catholics do care. They deserve better than having their outrage channeled into making the church more useful to Exxon Mobil and the Pentagon. Exposing the capitalist essence of both the perverts' defenders and the "reformers" would be a small but significant step in the long struggle to root out the profit system and the atrocities it fosters.

Fighting Racist-Fascist Jailings of Arab and Moslem Immigrants

At a packed community meeting on the evening of Sept. 11, a comrade denounced terrorism as a way to fight exploitation, while reminding the grieving audience of U.S. imperialism's role as the world's major terrorist. He cited bombings of the civilian populations of Vietnam, El Salvador and Panama, and the continuing air strikes on Iraq. The audience erupted in great applause.

It was a typical experience for many in mass movements. Later we linked 9/11 to the sharpening contradictions between opposing factions of the world's ruling class and to the struggle to control Middle East oil. When the government pinpointed bin Laden as the number one suspect in the attacks and began bombing Afghanistan for harboring him and his al Quaeda network, we explained the real reason for the invasion of Afghanistan: to support U.S. corporations' plans to build an oil and gas pipeline from the newly-developing deposits in the Caspian Sea region to the north, through Afghanistan to the Arabian Sea. Despite supporting documentation from media and official sources abroad, this view was a hard sell. But gradually as more government lies and misinformation were

uncovered, the built-in distrust many North Americans have for their rulers kicked in and our ideas were taken more seriously.

By the end of September we joined an anti-war movement, but that lost momentum after a few demonstrations over the contentious issue of justice for the victims of 9/11. It seemed that many were influenced by the patriotic fever consuming the general population and wanted the terrorists brought to justice. The bombing of innocent Afghans was condemned but a class analysis was lacking, about the fight between the fundamentalists and who they represent vs. the U.S. ruling class for control of the world's oil supplies.

Without a class outlook there could be no stand opposing the war. When the Patriot Act was passed in October, the fledgling anti-war movement quietly moved its concern to the attack on civil liberties, eventually focusing on the detainees issue — the arrest and imprisonment of hundreds of Middle Easterners and South Asians.

Media rhetoric vilifying Arabs and Islam started almost as soon as the towers fell. In our community, church and professional groups in areas with Arab, Muslim and South Asian populations prepared for the racist attacks sure to follow. When we heard of storeowners being beaten, incidents of harassment on the streets and arrests, we held forums to bring together communities where long-time neighbors viewed each other with suspicion and fear. We began to make new friends. Our show of solidarity emboldened our Muslim neighbors to speak out. Workers reported losing their jobs because of their national origins, of staying home fearing physical attacks. But most frightening was the state's crack-down as the FBI and INS picked up immigrants on the flimsiest of evidence—or seemingly no evidence at all — based only on their ethnic identity.

One woman's story symbolized many: her husband had been rousted from his bed at 6 A.M. and almost five weeks elapsed before she discovered he was in an INS detention center. It took another five weeks before she was allowed to visit him. She found a confused and emotionally frightened man, bruised, and bleeding from wrist and ankle shackles. He had committed no crimes. FBI checks revealed no connection with "terrorist organizations." Yet had been he was detained without charges and denied access to family or a lawyer.

As we realized the magnitude of the FBI and INS sweeps — over 1,200 men were arrested — we protested outside detention centers and INS offices. Our small numbers gradually grew. On Feb. 20, a National Day of Solidarity with Arabs, Muslims and South Asians was the beginning of a multi-racial fight-back. Immigrant students facing increased tuition fees — higher for residents than for citizens — became involved. Groups previously divided by religion, language and country of origin came together, recognizing a common enemy in a government that had already extended its net, rounding up and deporting hundreds of Latin Americans, Africans and Asians.

(Florida is expected to sign an agreement with the federal government allowing cops and sheriff's deputies to arrest "suspected," undocumented immigrants who might be "threats to national security." The INS in Kansas City is reviving "Operation Vanguard," a strategy in

which INS agents subpoena employers' hiring records to check for discrepancies such as invalid Social Security numbers. As a result, last November the INS began investigating 15 corporate-owned (not franchised) McDonalds restaurants in Johnson County, Kansas, leading to several deportations.)

No connection had been found between the 1,200 arrested and terrorist organizations. They're being held on minor immigration law violations that previously didn't warrant jail time. So why, if they are not a threat to "national security" as the government claims, are they still imprisoned almost six months later? Could these round-ups of the most vulnerable be a dress rehearsal for the future where the government needs to squash all opposition to the rulers' endless wars?

The ordeal of terror faced by cooks, cab drivers, cleaners, etc., detained since 9/11 --early morning knocks on the door, arrests without warrants, disappearances, detentions in undisclosed locations — resembles Chile in the 1970's under the fascist Pinochet government. Yet the movement's leaders shy away from the "f" word. They circle the wagons to cut off any attempts to link the growing repression to the ruling classes' need for war to protect the interests of the giant oil companies.

At demonstrations public speakers denounce the Patriot Act, passed last October with its curtailment of civil liberties and attack on the Bill of Rights. They condemn the treatment of the detainees and demand to know who is being detained and where they are, but not to free them all now nor to stop all immigrant detentions.. Their strategy uses a legal approach, but in a state discarding individual rights — which never helped many workers anyway --- how can appealing to the bosses laws win?

The leaders say people are "not ready" to make the links and need to overcome their fear. But the much-quoted words of Reverend Martin Niemolller about the development of fascism in Nazi Germany keeps ringing in our ears, "First they came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up, because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, but by that time there was no one left to speak."

A promising and growing multi-racial movement is stalled politically. We must sharpen the demands, reach out to those open to our ideas and take our politics to the working-class communities most affected by the round-ups.

Oscars Mask Racism

The U.S. ruling class has had the help of black politicians, movie stars, sports superstars and even rappers in its "war against terror." They've joined the bandwagon with pro-war patriotism and pledging "United We Stand." In the endless oil wars being waged by U.S. imperialism, black and Latino youth make up 40% of the front-line combat troops, the cannon fodder they need to defend Rockefeller's Exxon Mobil & Co. empire. U.S. rulers are ready to throw a few more crumbs to black superstars to try to win the allegiance of black workers, the very group they oppress and fear the most. A major example was the Oscars.

The billion people watching the Oscars were given the message that racism was on the way out in the U.S. Hosted by Whoopie Goldberg, Denzel Washington won best actor, Halle Berry won best actress, and Sidney Poitier received a lifetime achievement award. For the first time in history, a black actor and black actress swept the lead acting awards.

To be sure, these and many more black actors are as "talented" as any. And the treatment of black people in the motion picture industry is a history of racist exclusion and stereotypes. But as with the emergence of extremely talented black sports "superstars," the rulers use the few high-profile black "success" stories to mask their racist terror against the masses.

The U.S. has the largest prison population in world history, with 70% black and Latin. Hundreds of thousands are forced into prison labor "earning" a few cents an hour. Black workers suffer double the unemployment rates and one-third less family income than white workers. More black youth are in jail than in college. Black infant mortality rates rival those of the world's poorest countries.

The perfume of multi-millionaire "artists" in $20,000 gowns and Armani suits cannot cover this foul odor of this racism.

HOMELESS KIDS GET NO OSCARS

One way to judge a society is how it treats its children. While U.S. rulers spend ONE BILLION DOLLARS PER WEEK to maintain their naval armada protecting Big Oil in the Persian Gulf, consider the following:

• 1.4 million children are homeless in any given year. They make up 40% of the nation's homeless, have more health, hospital and developmental problems than non-homeless kids, and are more likely to be homeless as adults.

• In Chicago there are 6,000 shelter beds for a nightly homeless population of 20,000, half of them families with children. The majority sleeps in cars or abandoned buildings.

• In New York City, 13,000 children slept in homeless shelters or temporary apartments this winter. Families comprise 75% of the city's 32,000 homeless (nightly average), up 23% in one year, the largest one-year increase in the city's history.

• Seventy percent of homeless children suffer chronic illnesses like asthma and anemia.

• Almost half of all school-age homeless children suffer emotional problems like anxiety and depression.

• Currently there are 4.5 million more "extremely low income families" in need of housing than units available. (In 1970 there was a surplus of 300,000 units.)

• From the late 1970s to the late 1990s, New York City's poorest 20% saw their income decline 33%.

• In 1999, more than 25% of New Yorkers paid more than half their income for rent.

[*All above information from the Sunday New York Times Magazine (3/24) "The Hidden Lives of Homeless Children" by Jennifer Egan*]

This is the "American Way of Life" the ruling class is spreading with its "daisy cutter" bombs. The devastation of generations of children is directly caused by a capitalist profit system that keeps cutting wages and jobs, and waging wars big and small. Its real estate interests reap fortunes from throwing working-class families out on the street to gentrify neighborhoods with luxury housing for the likes of the Oscar crowd.

The Next World Order: 300,000 Troops to 'Smack Iraq'

In an article entitled "The Next World Order" in the April 1 *New Yorker* magazine, its Washington correspondent Nicholas Lemann interviewed several top officials of, and advisors to, the Bush Administration on the future direction of U.S. foreign policy. Below are brief excerpts.

A...forthright version of the same ideas ["preventing the rise of other superpowers"] can be found in a short book titled "From Containment to Global Leadership?, which Zalmay Khalizad,...now special envoy to Afghanistan, published a couple of years into the Clinton Administration....It recommends that that U.S. "preclude the rise of another global rival for the indefinite future. It is a vital U.S. interest to preclude such a development — i.e., to be willing to use force if necessary for the purpose."

[On Sept. 11th]: Inside government, the reason that September 11th appears to have been "a transformative moment"...is...that it drastically reduced the American public's usual resistance to American military involvement overseas, at least for a while."

[On the invasion of Iraq]: Kenneth Pollack, a former CIA analyst who was the National Security Council's staff expert on Iraq during the last years of the Clinton Administration...call[ed] for war against Saddam....

"The only way to do it is a full-scale invasion," he said. "We're talking about two grand corps, two to three hundred thousand people altogether....You need to take western Iraq and southern Iraq because otherwise they'll fire Scuds at Israel and at the Saudi oil fields. You probably want to prevent Iraq from blowing up its own oil fields, so troops have to occupy them....You go in as hard as you can as fast as you can." He slapped his hand on the top of the desk. "You get the enemy to divide his forces by threatening him in two places at once." His hand hit the desk again, hard. "Then you crush him." Smack.

THE GESTAPO WOULD HAVE BEEN JEALOUS...

In Nazi Germany, the Gestapo relied on a vast network of informers whose job was to rat on suspected enemies of the Reich. The U.S. Patriot Act — a joint Republican-Democrat effort — has given birth to a Gestapo clone called TIPS (Terrorism Information Prevention System). Under TIPS, run by the Justice Department, people in jobs that allow them easy access to homes, businesses and mass transit, will be recruited to spy on terrorists. Mail and package deliverers will be among the potential spies.

A pilot program is planned for August in ten cities with a population of 24 million. In its first phase, the goal is to recruit one million stoolpigeons, or 4% of that 24 million.

Reports from this nest of spies will be entered into a police database. The spied-on person might never know he/she is being watched. Already the Patriot Act allows for installing listening and other devices in someone's house without much evidence of the person being a "terrorist." This is a more vast and fascistic version of the FBI's old Cointelpro program, which spied on, and kept secret files of, millions involved in the anti-war and anti-racist civil rights movement of the 1960s-'70s.

TIPS will be coordinated by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), created under Reagan to carry out a mass invasion of Nicaragua in the 1980s when the Sandinistas ran that country. FEMA had the cover of coordinating actions taken during natural disasters, but it also has the same responsibilities during rebellions and "terrorist acts." It now has an additional job of confining in concentration camps anyone considered to be a "danger to national security."

Just like FEMA, Bush's recently announced Shadow Government was a creature of the Reagan administration. It will have powers to suspend the Constitution, declare martial law and give the President and FEMA control of the country, by-passing Congress.

These fascist spy programs are aimed at the entire working class. If workers in any industry, for instance auto or steel, struck "against the national interest," these fascist measures could be used to stop, jail and even kill them.

But Hitler's Nazi regime and its murderous concentration camps, spy agencies, torture chambers and invasions ended 988 years short of its planned 1,000-year reign, mainly by the Red Army and the communist-led resistance movement. Our job today is to learn from the heroic feats of these ant-fascist fighters, as well as their mistakes, and build a massive communist-led movement to make sure the U.S. bosses' plan for a new fascist Reich will meet a similar fate.

Labor Hacks Join Liberal Democrats in Forging Fascism

The development of fascism in the U.S. did not start with the fascistic Patriot Act and the Homeland Defence Office imposed after 9/11. The FBI's mass spying on individuals began during the Democratic Roosevelt Administration under J. Edgar Hoover who invigorated it with the Cointelpro program during the Vietnam War and civil rights struggle. Since the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, preparations for fascism accelerated. Then came the total collapse of the labor movement in every major struggle by workers against the bosses' attacks. These included:

• In August 1973, the UAW organized 1,000 union goons, including Klansmen, to crush the Mack Avenue sit-down strike, the first in auto since the 1930s. Led by Workers' Action Movement and PLP, the workers occupied the Chrysler plant to protest unsafe conditions. The hacks not only attacked the demands of the workers, but like low-life scabs, attacked the workers with baseball bats. The UAW leadership smashed the strike after Chrysler and the Detroit police had failed. In 1979, UAW president Fraser (who organized the assault to take back Mack Ave. for the bosses), was added to Chrysler's Board of Directors in exchange for massive concessions in wages and benefits, and over 500,000 jobs to Chrysler, Ford, and GM.

• When Reagan smashed the 1981 air controllers' strike and busted the PATCO union with 10,000 scabs, the AFL-CIO and their Democratic friends did nothing. This set the stage for sellouts of militant strikes at Eastern Airlines, Greyhound, Hormel meatpackers, Caterpillar, among coal miners — the list goes on and on.

• Just as the AFL-CIO leadership, staunch backers of the Democratic Party, supported the U.S. invasion of Vietnam, it has supported every major imperialist adventure since, from Desert Storm, to the 1999 Balkan air war to the current "war against terrorism."

The fascist measures now suffered by many workers and youth under the Patriot Act have long been in the planning stage, as outlined in Clinton's Hart-Rudman Commission report (exposed in CHALLENGE over the last year). The bosses needed a pretext to impose such draconian domestic measures. They got it on Sept. 11.

PENTAGON TARGETS WORLD WITH NUCLEAR WAR

The Bush Administration's "new" nuclear policy would use nuclear bombs against anyone they decide is their enemy. Previously they alleged they would use nuclear bombs only against a country that used them against the U.S. (Of course, that didn't include Japan, where they slaughtered 250,000 civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki — equal to the deaths of 80 World Trade Centers — when Japan was about to surrender.) They allegedly opposed proliferation of atomic weapons, as long as they could maintain their own stockpile. Now they've let the cat out of the bag. They want to use nuclear weapons against anyone, and at any time they decide.

Initially "only" Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Syria and Libya are targeted. Then it's extended to include "potential adversaries," Russia and China. But it doesn't end there. They finally say that the U.S. must be prepared for any contingency. "Contingencies can be categorized as immediate, potential or unexpected." "Unexpected" covers the whole world!

This latest pronouncement has liberals and their leading mouthpiece, Pentagon Aims to Nuke the Whole World

The New York Times, furious. The Times (editorial, 3/12) said such a policy would make the U.S. "a rogue state," breaking nuclear treaties (non-proliferation and test-bans), excluding "allies," and ignoring the uproar such a policy would provoke internationally, especially in the Muslim world. These liberals, and the main wing of the ruling class they represent, see the Wolfowitz/Perle group putting this forward as blowing the U.S.'s cover in its drive for world domination. These are the same forces_who think they can go it alone in seizing Iraq using hi-tech weapons and very few U.S. troops. (See adjoining editorial.) The liberals don't oppose U.S. nuclear supremacy or nuclear blackmail but maintain it must be employed without, if possible, provoking more problems than U.S. rulers can handle.

The proposed policy coincides with the intention to conduct a "war on terrorism" in 40 countries for 50 years or as long as it takes. The USA Patriot Law is the fascist corollary of this imperialist policy — to squash any rising domestic resistance to this mass murder of the international working class.

This intention to prepare to pulverize any opponent of U.S. imperialism demonstrates the futility of "persuading" the rulers to agree not to use nuclear bombs. For years groups like SANE campaigned for a ban on testing atomic weapons. The "test-ban"

treaty was hailed as the answer to nuclear war. Now the desperate U.S. ruling class has shown how much such treaties among imperialists are worth. Imperialism means war. It always has and always will.

The rulers would have us believe that atomic war means "the end of the world." They figure that threat can scare anyone opposed to them to knuckle under to their demands. But remember, World War I produced the Russian Revolution. World War II brought the Chinese Revolution. Nuclear blackmail is just as likely to lead to the beginning of the end for world imperialism.

Yes, the world's bosses can very well kill millions, even hundreds of millions of workers (nearly 200 million in 20th century wars alone). U.S. bosses have been the vanguard killer for two centuries, from Native Americans to enslavement of black people to Hiroshima to Vietnam to Afghanistan. But they cannot kill the international working class, nor the ideas of communism that will lead our class to turn their imperialist atomic blackmail into class war for workers power, no matter how long it takes or what the obstacles. All the more reason to build for May Day and build a communist movement to lead the working class crush these mass murders and their capitalist system.

U.S. RULERS: No. 1 TERRORIST AGAINST WORLD'S WORKERS

The U.S. ruling class loves to portray its expanding oil war as a crusade against terror. The attacks that killed several thousand workers and other civilians in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania were horrific. But as practitioners of worldwide mass terror, no one takes a back seat to U.S. imperialism. Here's an incomplete list of the civilian blood it has spilled since World War II in defense of its super-profits and top-dog status:

The U.S. remains the only country to use nuclear weapons in a shooting war In 1945, it did so twice over Japan, after the Japanese was already offering to surrender. The rulers claimed they were "sparing thousands of U.S. lives" that would have been lost in a land invasion required to win the war without the A-bombs. Many historians have exposed this lie. The true purpose of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was to threaten the then socialist Soviet Union, which had just won an overwhelming victory in a massive land battle against the Japanese military. The immediate and long-range death toll caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was 200,000 and 140,000 respectively, all but 20,000 of them civilians.

The Korean War of 1950-53 gave the big bosses another opportunity to perfect the technique of bombing civilians. U.S. General MacArthur, whom the bosses' history books depict as a "hero," ordered the destruction of "every installation, factory, city, and village" in the north. General Curtis LeMay, who later became Air Force Chief of Staff, boasted of burning down "every town in North Korea and South Korea, too." In three years, three million Korean civilians died, most of them from U.S. bombings.

The Vietnam war and its expansion into Cambodia and Laos, saw the U.S. military drop four times the tonnage of bombs used by the entire allied total of World War II. Again, the civilian population paid the heaviest price. The generally recognized death total in these three countries is around five million.

But U.S. imperialist terror isn't limited to aerial bombing. When U.S.-backed fascist Indonesian generals mounted an unsuccessful coup against a government tilting too closely toward then-socialist China, the CIA helped them slaughter a million pro-communist workers. The administration of U.S. President Johnson voiced "delight" at this massacre. *Time* magazine called the Indonesian generals' rise to power as the "West's best news for years in Asia."

Ten years later, the fascist Suharto regime invaded East Timor, a scant 24 hours after U.S. president Ford had ended a visit to Jakarta. Two hundred thousand workers —one-third of Timor's population — died in this prolonged atrocity before the Indonesian military withdrew in 1999. The U.S. government obstructed every international effort to stop it.

Bush Sr.'s Desert Storm for oil murdered hundreds of thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians in a 43-day long bombing campaign and four-day ground assault in 1991. But the real massacres began in earnest after the war had ended. U.S.-enforced sanctions led directly to the death of 500,000 Iraqi children younger than five between 1991 and 1998, from malnutrition, unclean drinking water and lack of medicine. The total death count from these sanctions probably exceeds a million, and the sanctions are still in force. They continue to murder thousands of Iraqi children every month. This is the price Clinton Secretary of State Madeleine Albright found "worth it" for keeping large amounts of Iraqi oil off the market.

In Latin America, U.S. rulers have financed and militarily supported dictators with a penchant for massacring their own populations. The generals ruling U.S. ally Argentina "disappeared" 30,000 people between 1976 and 1983. After the CIA orchestrated the overthrow of a popularly-elected government in Guatemala in 1954, it installed a dictatorship that killed some 200,000 workers and farmers in a 30-year period of repression.

U.S. backing for murderous military dictatorships includes Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the Philippines,

Greece and many African countries. For years, the U.S. supported the ruthless *apartheid* regime in South Africa.

More recently, the 1999 Clinton/NATO air war over the former Yugoslavia terrorized civilians, destroyed the country's infrastructure, and polluted its water supplies, all for the sake of ensuring U.S. companies' access to Balkan energy pipelines.

Blanket bombing has already become a significant feature of U.S. imperialism's latest "war against terror," in Afghanistan. The civilian death toll has yet to be published, because the U.S. military is keeping it under tight wraps. But between the bombs and the disease and starvation the war is causing, we can assume that many thousands have already died and that many more will follow them.

(Source: Robin Miller, "Washington Has a Love Affair with Terror," *North County Times*, 3/10)

Arab-European Alliance Threatens U.S. Dominance in Mid-East

"Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's proposal...to break...the impasse in Palestine and to preempt...a US military strike against Iraq....would mean less American dominance of the whole Middle Eastern peace process — while the European Union is busy reconfiguring itself as the big player-in-waiting. The EU is more than eager to assume an extremely high profile. Talks have been going on since 1991. The Arab world is definitely considering a formal "invitation." Not accidentally, endless German delegations travel to Baghdad.

Arab diplomats — echoing Brussels — also comment that the US and Israel definitely don't want the EU to have a strong role in the Middle East. Musa Kellani, a respected Jordanian columnist, observes, "The European posture is based on the realization that Europe stands to bear the brunt of instability in the Middle East — by sheer proximity and the historical European involvement in the region's affairs."

From the point of view of both Amman [Jordan] and Baghdad, and for a number of not necessarily the same reasons, it is fair to assume that increasingly the Arab world is going to rely on Europe. Arab diplomats, including those present at the Arab League summit..., are convinced that Washington's interest in the Middle East revolves around one issue only: oil. And they have also seen how Washington has simply ignored the EU collective criticism of the Bush administration's obsession on attacking Iraq.

(From "Iraq Diary" by Pepe Escobar in *Asia Times On Line*, 3/28)

Thousands Murdered by US Air Bombing

Lately the liberal media, led by the New York Times, has begun to analyze "possible" civilian casualties in the U.S. war on Afghanistan.

They quote "humanitarian" organizations as saying there "might" be as many as 1,000 civilian deaths, but "it's hard to prove" since they "lack independent evidence." Their latest editorial (Feb. 13) reduces even that figure: "No reliable overall casualty numbers exist, although some estimates say that hundreds of Afghan civilians have perished in misdirected strikes." It's all an "accident" says this leading liberal mouthpiece. They give short shrift to the most detailed reports compiled by Professor Marc Herold of the University of New Hampshire, drawn and cross-checked from dozens of newspaper reporters from Britain, France, India, Canada, Pakistan, Australia and even the U.S. (although the latter are few and far between). Herold proved a minimum of 3,767 deaths just from Oct. 7 to Dec. 6, but this warranted merely a half sentence in the Times "analysis," the latter preferring to fall back on the "hard-to-prove" defense.

Herold declares that, "The absolute need to avoid U.S. military casualties means flying high up in the sky, increasing the probability of killing civilians...."

"....Better stand clear and fire away," reports The Toronto Globe & Mail (10/31/01) "Given this implicit decision, the slaughter of innocent people, as a statistical eventuality is not an accident but a priority — in which Afghan casualties are substituted for American military casualties." (Our emphasis, Ed.)

Thus, in the U.S. imperialists' war, where "The sacrificed Afghan civilians are not 'white' [and] the overwhelming number of U.S. pilots and elite ground troops are white....the scale of violence used by the U.S government...knows no limits." (Herold) For U.S. rulers, racism knows no bounds.

The bombing has "progressed from medium-sized missiles to Tomahawk and cruise missiles, to bunker-busting 2,000 lb. bombs to [B-52] carpet-bombing using cluster bombs and now the devastating daisy cutter bombs that annihilate everything in a 600-meter radius." ("The Evils of Bombing," London Guardian, 11/08/01)

"A U.S. officer aboard the U.S. aircraft carrier Carl Vinson described the use of 2,000 lb. cluster bombs dropped by B-52 bombers: 'A 2,000 lb. bomb, no matter where you drop it, is a significant emotional [!] event for anyone within a square mile.'" (London Guardian, 11/2/01)

The liberals go as far as justifying the bombing saying "in the long run" without the Taliban "more lives will be saved." (They ignore the fact that the U.S. under the liberal Democrat Carter organized the fundamentalists' attack on Afghanistan 23 years ago — before the Soviet invasion — from which the Taliban was born, using $3 billion of CIA-directed funds.)

But the thousands of deaths from carpet bombing are only a small part of the story. "In the long run," tens of thousands will die from

the disease-creating depleted uranium (DU) used in all U.S. bombs which makes them more deadly; from the starvation caused by the destruction of Afghan society and the withdrawal of previous emergency aid missions fearing these bombings; from the unexploded bombs remaining throughout the country (virtual land mines); and the looting, banditry and warlord fighting filling the vacuum left by the Taliban retreat.

Finally, even using the figure of 3,767 Afghan civilians who Herold proves in meticulous detail had died from U.S. bombing attacks just by Dec. 6, 2001 (the current figure is well over 5,000), when comparing the population of Afghanistan to the U.S. (about one-tenth), these deaths are "roughly equivalent to about 38,000 U.S. deaths, or…eleven World Trade Center attacks." (Herold)

All this slaughter stems from the U.S. bosses' drive to control the world's oil supplies, shipping routes and pipelines. Afghanistan stands between the massive oil and gas reserves of Central Asia and the Arabian Sea, a gateway to the energy needs of India, China and Southeast Asia. It is only a small taste of what the mass murderers in Wall Street and the White House have planned for the world's working class, with Iraq next on the war agenda. The absence of a world communist movement permits these butchers to run rampant in their pursuit of profit. It is our task to re-build such a movement and turn these imperialist wars into class war for communism. Building red May Day marches is a crucial step in this direction, part of the working class's answer to the ravages of world capitalism.

Anti-War Conference Avoids Real Cause of War

NEW YORK CITY, Feb. 24 — College students, professors and workers convened at Columbia University for the first national anti-war conference since Bush & Co. began its imperialist invasion last fall. Over 25 colleges and universities as well as various political organizations were represented, including PLP.

Workshops dealt with imperialism, the role of oil and the function of workers in the bosses' war. At the "New York City Labor Against the War" workshop, a union leader explained how he had been working with other union heads to organize workers against the war.

During the Q&A period one PL member suggested clarifying to the workers that this is an imperialist war about oil. The union leader categorized this as unusable "leftist jargon." Such excuses are part of the reason why workers in general are so passive against the war, mass layoffs, fascist terror, etc. It is clear that this message must

by-pass these bosses' lieutenants and brought directly to the rank and file.

At another workshop, "The Politics of Oil," the group discussed the role of oil in the Middle East. PL members pointed out that the working class will not benefit from the war and that the capitalist group bin Laden represents is main fighting to control Saudi Arabia's oil, something workshop leaders ignored. One member said Clinton's Hart-Rudman Report had predicted the 9/11 events and outlined the government's fascist response. Workshop participants asked for further resources on these issues and took CHALLENGES.

In a larger gathering, two proposals on "points of unity" were to be debated (so we thought). A Peace group from Columbia Univ. (heavily influenced by the ISO — International Socialist Organization) put forward one while students from SUNY-Binghamton — including PL'ers — advanced the other. The latter linked the role of U.S. imperialism to the cause of the war; exposed the universities as institutions that support and promote war and fascism; and put forth the crucial idea that control of oil is behind the conflicts in the Middle East.

The ISO and other liberal reformers revealed their true opportunist colors when they said that, although they agreed with the SUNY points, those proposals were "setting the bar too high" for other students and workers to become involved in the anti-war movement. (!) They then railroaded the discussion, using the tactics of structural and procedural questions to monopolize the discussion. Some rank-and-file students who came for the discussion left because it became so convoluted. The liberal points were adopted, sidestepping the views about war, capitalism and exploitation.

The opportunists leading the conference think they're fighting against the war but by ignoring the relationship of capitalism and imperialism to the war are allying themselves with the Democratic Party liberals who support it.

PLP students and friends will continue to work, and build the Party, in these anti-war conferences. We need to overcome the opportunists like the ISO and their liberal friends have no confidence that workers can understand that capitalism is the cause of war and fascism, and that the only solution is students allying with a worker-led communist revolution.